



March 1, 2021

Re: Raised S.B. No. 948 (2021) – Testimony of Support

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Although I do not have children myself, I strongly feel that educating the youth should be one of the top priorities of every community. Everyone in and around politics and government seems to consistently acknowledge the critical nature of a good education system when giving speeches or addressing journalists, yet, those individuals and the governing bodies of which they are part of, are inconsistent in actually allocating the funds required to fulfill the varied needs of the diverse student population across the state.

Establishing, implementing, maintaining, evaluating and overseeing necessary improvements to any system, not only needs a good system, it necessitates in-depth research to identify best practices to meet the needs of specific communities and particular students, and the quality resources (human and material) to facilitate and optimize the system. The additional challenge posed by COVID-19 means the funds to achieve these goals should be coming sooner not later.

As Manager of WORK_SPACE, the Town of Manchester's Coworking, Meeting and Gallery space in the heart of Downtown Manchester, I work to create an affordable, flexible and hospitable environment for entrepreneurs, small businesses, remote workers, non-profits and artists to meet, learn, create and work. Since opening in January of 2018, we have promoted our services as open and inclusive to everyone; making accommodations to address the distinct need of each person and organization. However, it was not until we intentionally and pro-actively instituted an outreach campaign that we started creating a community within our walls that reflected the diversity of the community throughout Manchester. We still have a long way to

go, and it would help, if these racial and economic gaps were addressed more effectively earlier in the development lifecycle of the future employees, entrepreneurs, artists and community leaders. Racial disparity in education leads to racial disparity in the workforce. Lack of equity leads to lack of access and inspiration, thus denying all of us the chance to benefit from every student reaching their potential. Maintaining the status quo, even if just for another year or two, seems short-sighted if not altogether blind to the needs of the moment.

My understanding is that the ECS formula proposed in Bill 948 allows for students who are living in concentrated poverty and/or who are learning English to receive the funding they need to succeed. It will also eliminate the ECS phase-in schedule and fully fund districts, and expand ECS funding for ALL public-school students. It offers clarity and choice while mitigating volatility and additional fees in enrollment for student tuition and benefits nearly every district. It is supported by legislative, education, community and municipal stakeholders across the state, and I support them and this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey Zackin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stacey Zackin, PhD, MSW, PCC
Manager, WORK_SPACE